

Oak Street
UNCLASSIFIED

Proceedings of a Joint Meeting

...CALLED BY...

MR. CHARLES SCOTT.

President of the Executive Committee

Interstate Mississippi River Improvement and Levee Association

...AND THE...

**Presidents of the Levee Boards of the Lower Mississippi
Valley,**

IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.,

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1901.

Mr. Scott, in calling the meeting to order, stated that it was not his intention to inflict the meeting with anything like a speech ; but that he would endeavor, in a conversational way, to call attention to the important matters that should be discussed, and some solution of which should be reached here to-day.

Most of us know, I suppose, the genesis of this Interstate Mississippi River Improvement and Levee Association. It was born in the dark and troubled days of 1890, when much of the Mississippi Valley was inundated. It occurred to me, at that time, that a convention of the people of the Mississippi Valley should be called. A number of prominent gentlemen in Vicksburg called that convention ; and I think I never had the honor, nor do I think any other man ever had the honor of presiding over a more intelligent, earnest, and energetic body of workers.

After the assemblage of the convention, it occurred to me that our efforts in the past to secure national appropriations had

been going along on improper, or rather, impractical lines. Resolutions would be passed, which always had some effect, but then the body would disband, and then the old adage that "what is everybody's business is nobody's business," seemed especially applicable. It occurred to me that it was desirable to have some permanent organization—somebody who could keep their hands on the public pulse.

Whenever one of the great railroad corporations, which never act from sentiment, as we all know, but upon purely business principles, have anything of importance before Congress, they do not leave it to chance, they do not leave it altogether to Congressmen. Take the Trans-continental railways, all of them have an intelligent man or a number of men at the Capital at all times. The reclamation of this vast empire in the Mississippi Valley, I think, holds imperial domain, I might say, over every other subject in the country. For this purpose, it was proposed that a permanent organization be created along business lines, and it was formed.

We sent, as you will remember, a strong committee to Washington City. They found the levee forces discouraged, disheartened, and almost totally disorganized. It is true that there were some able men in Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and other riparian States who were endeavoring to stem the tide, among these were the Hon. N. C. Blanchard, of this State, and Gen. Catchings, of Mississippi. The levee forces were practically routed. Why, Capt. Cowden, I am told, occupied with his maps, for two hours, the Committee on Commerce of the Senate, and really the whole of the congressional sentiment seemed tending his way. This committee remained at Washington for some time and they turned levee sentiment back into the proper channel.

In reference to the good work which Captain Patrick Henry had done at Washington, as the special representative of the Interstate Mississippi River Improvement and Levee Association, and the great importance of retaining his most valuable savings, I know, from personal observation, and from communication with the very highest levee authorities in the country that his duties have been very intelligently and most satisfactorily discharged. The service that he has rendered there has been most

invaluable to our cause. He can, and has done many things that a congressman cannot do. He can keep congressmen in touch with each other, and, in fact, as Gen. Catchings wrote me the other day, his splendid management and never failing great tact, has been of incalculable value to our levee interests. Of his work our distinguished friend, Gen. Catchings, wrote as follows :

VICKSBURG, MISS., NOVEMBER 11TH, 1901.

HON. CHAS. SCOTT,
ROSEDALE, MISS. :

DEAR SIR :

Having noticed that you have called a meeting of the Levee Presidents to take place at the St. Charles Hotel on the 15th inst., with a view to obtaining the necessary funds to maintain Capt. Pat Henry of Arkansas in Washington during the approaching session of Congress, I take the liberty of saying to you that I regard it as a matter of very great importance that he shall be sent back to Washington. My long experience in all matters pertaining to the interests of the river, enables me I think to place the proper value upon his services, and also upon the work of the Levee Association from its organization. The work of securing appropriations from Congress has been extremely laborious and often times prosecuted under such difficulties as to be extremely disheartening, and I believe if it had not been for the stimulus afforded by the Levee Association and the influence which it constantly kept at work, that the Senators and Representatives from the Mississippi Valley might have fallen into the idea that the efforts being made in Congress were not as important and necessary as they seemed to think, and in view of the disheartening character of their struggle might have abated it somewhat.

I do not know that this is so, or mean to say that it is so, but I do know that in my own case for instance the extreme interest manifested by the Levee organization has been to me a constant stimulus to do my very best and I presume it was so with Senators and Representatives from the valley generally. As for Capt. Henry, he was extremely intelligent and kept himself always on the alert, and was ready at all times to give advice

or to go upon missions or to do anything that he was called upon to do. His exceptional intelligence and very remarkable tact peculiarly fitted him for this sort of work. While my connection with the work has ceased, my interest in its success remains the same, and it is because of that interest that I take the liberty of addressing you this letter.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

T. C. CATCHINGS.

Now, gentlemen, the sole question for you to decide to-day is whether you will, or will not, further attempt to obtain national appropriations, and to urge river and levee appropriations by an organized effort, or whether all organized effort shall be abandoned, and you will simply let things drift and take their course. I believe there is no doubt as to what it will be, but that is a matter for you in your wisdom to determine.

If we are to be represented in Washington, it should be through Captain Henry. Granting that another man fully as able can be found to care for our levee interests in Washington, he could hardly have the experience acquired by Captain Henry, nor his extensive pleasant acquaintance among Congressmen. Qualifications so necessary.

We have been promising to pay Captain Henry \$3000 a year. To leave one's home and business, and defray the expenses of a life in Washington, you must know this is not extravagant pay, nor is the Captain regarded as a lobbyist in the ordinary sense of the word, but is looked upon as the representative of one of the intelligent extended constituencies of the whole country, and he is accepted as one there in the public interest. For several years we have been running behind in our account with Captain Henry. The deficit is now in excess of \$3000.

In the case of our worthy secretary, Mr. W. A. Everman, it was agreed to pay \$300 a year for his services, but, I must say, he has fared even worse than Captain Henry, for he has received nothing. But, if we are to continue on, we must hold the servant worthy of his hire.

I think the fixed charges of the Association are about \$2300 per year; that is, not taking in consideration stationery, stamps,

DUPLICATE

Author Interstate Miss. River Improvement & Levee
(Surname first) Assn

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Pres. of levee boards of lower Miss. Valley
November 15, 1901

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and other contingent expenses, for which, I believe, a fund should be provided.

Now showing the need of providing for contingent expenses I mention the incident of our part taken recently in the retention of Judge Taylor as a member of the Mississippi River Commission, I considered that of vital importance to all of our river and levee interests, it being known that that most estimable gentleman entertained wise broad and friendly views as to both. Whereas had he been replaced, his successor might or might not have been found in accord with the plans of the Commission being followed out.

Captain Henry was the first to learn that Judge Taylor was slated for removal, that his re-appointment as a member of the Mississippi River Commission would not be made. He immediately wired me to that effect. There was no time for the slow process of the mails, so I wired every Board of Trade and every prominent Chamber of Commerce from Chicago to New Orleans. I sent that day a mass of telegrams, and instantaneously the responses came to those telegrams. The result was that such a fight was put up for Judge Taylor that he was retained on the Commission. This is one of the incidental expenses that the President of this Association has to meet. The telegrams cost \$50, but there being no funds in hand, I paid for them myself.

Judge J. G. White, President R. R. A. and B. B. Levee District, of Louisiana, here asked Mr. Scott how much he thought should be raised annually.

Mr. Scott : I think I can get down to figures, \$3000.00 for our representative at Washington, \$300.00 for our permanent Secretary. I will state that the permanent Treasurer of the Association is the Delta Trust and Banking Company of Vicksburg, the funds of the Association are deposited there and checked out by the Secretary, the checks being sent to me for approval. We owe at present \$2040 to Capt. Henry on his past year's salary. Therefore we must provide for him this year \$5040. Of course, this amount would be reduced by \$2040, after this year. I should think that a fund of five or six hundred dollars ought to be ample for contingent expenses. I think a fund of \$6000.00 should be raised for the first year.

Mr. Scott : I now suggest that the first thing in order should be the selection of a permanent chairman. I presume in a meeting of this kind a temporary organization is unnecessary.

Hon. J. E. Ransdell, seconded by Judge J. G. White, moved that Col. T. G. Sparks, President Atchafalaya Basin Levee District, of Louisiana, be elected permanent chairman. *Carried.*

Col. Sparks, in taking the chair, said he did so with a great deal of hesitation, as he had just risen from a sick bed to attend this meeting, but for the sake of our friend, Mr. Scott, I believe I should attempt anything.

Col. Sparks then said that in his district, and in southern Louisiana generally, there were many people who objected to the payment of this subscription, owing to a feeling that they were not generally carried by all the interested parties, our district will be willing to pay its share. Our levee system is about completed or will be in a year's time. Yet, while safe along our own line, there remains the same danger of destruction from any weaker levees above. Within the last ten years we have expended three millions one hundred thousand dollars in our district alone, every dollar of which came directly from the people.

Col. Sparks stated that the next thing in order was the election of a permanent secretary.

On motion of Mr. Scott, seconded by Mr. Victor Maurin, Mr. J. W. Bryant, of New Orleans, was made secretary of the meeting.

Mr. Scott, seconded by Judge White, moved that, in order to facilitate the business of the meeting, two committees, one on resolutions, and one on appropriations, be appointed, the committees to report to the meeting. *Carried.*

Mr. J. W. Cutrer, President Yazoo-Mississippi Levee District, suggested that, before these two committees be appointed it might be well to have a list of the representatives present, and the different organization they represent.

The roll was called and the following representatives were found to be present :

*Executive Committee Interstate Mississippi River Improvement
and Levee Association.*

Charles Scott, President,	W. A. Everman, Secretary,
Rosedale, Miss.	Greenville, Miss.
Green Clay,	J. A. Miller,
Mexico, Mo.	Cairo, Ill.
Hon. J. A. Ransdell,	J. M. Parker,
Lake Providence, La.	New Orleans, La.
J. W. Bryant, New Orleans, La.	

Levee Boards.

J. A. Cunningham, President, Caruthersville, Mo.
St. Francis Levee Board, Missouri.

J. C. Harris, President, Tiptonville, Tenn.
Reelfoot Levee Board, Tennessee.

O. N. Killough, President, Vandalle, Ark. H. N. Phar, Chief
Engineer.
St. Francis Levee Board, Arkansas.

Ed. Pillow, President ; Greenfield Quarles, Helena, Ark.
Cotton Belt Levee Board, Arkansas.

Patrick Henry, President, Henrico, Ark.
Laconia Levee District, Arkansas.

J. W. Cutrer, President, Clarksdale, Miss.
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District, Mississippi.

R. W. Smith, President, Arkansas City, Ark.
Desha County Levee Board, Arkansas.

X. J. Pindall, President, Dumas, Ark. T. J. Quirke.
Red Fork Levee Board, Arkansas.

Walter Davis, President, Lakehall, Ark.
Chicot County Levee Board, Arkansas.

J. M. Jayne, President ; C. H. West, Chief Engineer, Green-
ville, Miss.
Mississippi Levee Board, Mississippi.

W. T. Barham, President, Oakridge, La.
Tensas Basin Levee District, Louisiana.

J. T. McClellan, President, Tallulah, La.
Fifth Louisiana District, Louisiana.

Thos. G. Sparks, President, Musson, La. A. D. Barrow,
Secretary, Port Allan, La.

Atchafalaya Basin Levee District, Louisiana.

Victor Maurin, President; J. S. Brady, Jr. P. Willis, W. J.
McCune, Donaldsonville, La.

Lafourche Basin Levee District, Louisiana.

John Dymond, President; Benito Ojeda, Henry McCall, Jr.,
New Orleans, La.

Lake Borgne Levee District, Louisiana.

Otto Thoman, President, New Orleans, La.

Orleans Levee District, La.

George Schoenberger, President, Buras, La.

Buras Levee District, Louisiana.

J. G. White, President, Alexandria, La.

Red River, Atchafalaya and Bayou Boeuf Levee District,
Louisiana.

J. W. Jeter, President, Benton, La.

Bossier Levee District, Louisiana.

J. L. Haspel, President; David Haspel, Secretary, New
Orleans, La.

Grand Prairie Levee District, Louisiana.

A. Perrilliat, C. E.; Sidney Lewis, C. E.; F. M. Kerr, C. E.;

M. P. Robertson, C. E., New Orleans, La.

State Board of Engineers, Louisiana.

Appointments to the Committees on Resolutions and Appropriations were made by the chairman, as follows, viz:

Resolutions.

Joseph E. Ransdell, Louisiana; Charles Scott, Mississippi; Green Clay, Missouri; Otto Thoman, New Orleans; Greenfield Quarles, Arkansas; J. A. Miller, Cairo, Ill.; J. W. Cutrer, Mississippi; Captain H. N. Pharr, Arkansas.

Appropriations.

T. J. McClellan and A. Perrilliat, of Louisiana; J. M. Jayne and Chas. H. West, of Mississippi; Walter Davis and O. N. Killough, of Arkansas; Sidney F. Lewis, of New Orleans, and each of the Presidents of the Levee Boards present.

Hon. J. E. Ransdell, M. C., Louisiana District, was then invited to address the meeting.

Mr. Ransdell: I accept this invitation with a great deal of pleasure. My heart and soul is in the work for which we have gathered here to-day. Our distinguished President, or rather the President of the Interstate Mississippi River Improvement and Levee Association has covered so fully the ground for which we have assembled here to-day, that I hardly know how to discuss it myself without repeating what he has said. That the Association, of which he is President, has done a magnificent work since its organization in 1890, I am thoroughly convinced. You have heard his statement that the work done by Capt. Henry in our behalf was most efficient; but I would like to add a brief meed of praise in his behalf. I have been in Congress only a short while, as you know. I have served only one term and during that term I became acquainted with Capt. Henry, and watched the work he was doing. I do not think I ever attended a session that Capt. Henry was not present, either in the hall or in the lobby. He was as watchful and careful as it was possible for a man to be. I know that I went to him time and again to ascertain the status of the rivers and harbors bill, he was always able to post me, to tell me exactly what was going on.

When elected, I determined to give special attention to river interests, hoping that in time I might get on the Rivers and Harbors Committee, I thought of the valuable help I should receive from a man so well equipped as Captain Henry.

I know of the great service rendered by Captain Henry in Judge Taylor's behalf. He was, I believe, the first one to discover that there was a movement to remove Judge Taylor. He immediately drew up a petition for his retention, and he induced many of the republican members of the Lower House, and also some members of the Senate, to sign it, and also quite a number of the democratic senators and representatives, that was helpful, yet, he did more, manifesting his worth and influence, for he induced party leaders, men high in the inner counsels, to go and intercede with the President for the retention of our honored great friend on the Commission. We, acquainted with the circumstances, knew his to be a delicate mission, but his tact, patience and persistence triumphed over every discouragement.

Capt. Henry told me he intended to resign, as he did not know that his work was understood, or longer desired perhaps. But I induced him to withhold his resignation until the levee boards could be heard from. We have had this organization for many years now. It has worked well and, I believe, has accomplished a great deal for us ; and to discontinue this work, or to stop our special representative in Washington, at this time, I think, would be a serious mistake, indeed.

Feeling so much concern in the matter, I have the following letters, which I ask the Secretary to read.

The Secretary read as follows :

{ MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION'
U. S. STEAMER MISSISSIPPI,
November 14th, 1901.

HON. J. E. RANSELL,

ADDRESSED.

DEAR SIR :

In answer to your request for my opinion of the value of the services of Captain Patrick Henry as representative of the interests of the Mississippi Valley at Washington, I cannot do otherwise than speak of them in the highest terms. Captain Henry's high character as a man, his diplomatic tact, his thorough knowledge of all matters pertaining to the river and its improvement, his wide acquaintance with men, his long experience in the work, and his rare personal and social qualities, all combine to make him the man for the place. I think it will be a grave error to let him go if it is possible to induce him to remain.

Very truly yours,

R. S. TAYLOR.

{ MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION,
U. S. STEAMER MISSISSIPPI.
November 13th, 1901.

HON. J. E. RANSELL,

DEAR SIR :

Replying to your enquiry concerning an organization of the lower riparian States with the object of presenting before Congress the levee interests, I beg to state that I consider these interests of such importance that they should be promoted in all proper

ways. This can be best done by organization and representation. By these means most valuable assistance can be given to our Congressmen, who are charged with such a multiplicity of duties that such a course is necessary and proper. I have had opportunity of observing and fully estimating the effective work done by the Association formed in Vicksburg, of which Mr. Charles Scott is President, and whose representative is Mr. Patrick Henry ; and do not hesitate to say that the cessation of this work would be a great misfortune to the riparian States below Cairo, and that every effort should be made to perfect and perpetuate that, or a similar organization, and to continue the services of Mr. Patrick Henry.

Very truly,

B. M. HARROD.

{ U. S. STEAMER MISSISSIPPI,
{ LOUISIANA, Nov. 12, 1901.

HON. J. E. RANDELL,

LAKE PROVIDENCE, LA. :

DEAR SIR :

Replying to your enquiries regarding my views about the propriety and importance of keeping a special representative of our levee interests at Washington during the sessions of Congress, I have to say that it has always appeared to me an entirely proper thing for the various levee boards to send their agents or representatives to appear before Congressional committees, or to appeal to individual members in advocacy of the great public interests which these levee boards administer, and I have supposed it to be a legitimate and proper use of the levee funds to apply them in paying the necessary expenses of such representatives and agents. In fact I have always supposed that any expenditure, not expressly prohibited by law, which in the judgment of the levee boards would aid in improving the levees, or in securing the appropriation of means for their improvement, to be perfectly legitimate and proper.

As you are aware, most of our levee boards have, for some years past, subscribed to a fund for securing the attendance and services at Washington, in their interests, of Mr. Patrick Henry ; and I understand the principal object of the approaching meeting

of levee board presidents at New Orleans, is to make some arrangements by which Mr. Henry can be continued in the same position.

I have been told by several members of Congress that they have found his services invaluable in keeping them informed on innumerable matters and circumstances likely to affect the action of committees on the progress of legislation.

But of all this you must be much better informed than I can be.

I sincerely trust that the levee boards will agree to continue contributions for keeping a special representative in Washington, and that Mr. Henry's services may be retained.

Yours very truly,

HENRY B. RICHARDSON,
Chief, State Engineers.

Mr. Ransdell: Mr. Chairman, I believe a fund should be provided to enable the President of this Association to send delegates to the important conventions which are held throughout the country. For instance, there was recently held at Baltimore a Rivers and Harbors Convention, which proved a most important assemblage. One or more of our brightest men should be sent to take part in such meetings, and for that and the other purposes just mentioned we should raise a fund of not less than \$8,000. (Applause).

Mr. Otto Thoman, President of the Orleans Levee Board: Mr. Chairman, I wish to explain the position of our board just here. We have never subscribed to this Association because our attorney advised that we could not use the board's money that way. I promise, however, to again bring this matter up and to do all I can consistently to persuade our board to subscribe.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, I move a recess until two o'clock, in order that the committees may meet and prepare their report.
Carried.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Meeting was called to order at 2:15 P. M.

The Chair: The first thing in order is the resolutions. Is the committee ready to report.

Mr. Ransdell : Mr. Chairman, on behalf of that committee, I submit the following :

Resolutions.

RESOLVED : 1st, that the country at large regards the failure of the last Rivers and Harbors Bill as a heavy and unexpected blow to one of its most important interests. At the same time they realize that Congressional sentiment was not responsible for this grievous error, and the public confidently believes and looks to the next congress to relieve the situation by adequate and generous appropriations for the betterment of our rivers and harbors.

2nd. Resolved, further, That in our opinion no better use can be made of the public fund, than by making liberal appropriations for river and harbor improvements, the same to be expended along intelligent lines, as recommended and mapped out by competent engineers, and according to the continuous contract system recently adopted and used with the most economical and satisfactory results.

3rd. Resolved : That while cheerfully conceding that the interests of all the harbors and water ways of the country should be properly recognized and fostered by the national government, we respectfully submit that the interests of the Mississippi River and valley, owing to their magnitude and great importance, especially deserve congressional consideration, and call for liberal appropriations to carry out the system of improvements wisely adopted by the Mississippi River Commission, including revetment work, dredging, and an adequate system of dykes, which are not only valuable adjuncts in preserving the regimen of the river, but are of incalculable benefit to the riparian States, and to the country at large, in protecting and reclaiming the vast areas of aluvial lands, whose products, converted into money at home and abroad, contribute materially to the wealth and prosperity of the whole people.

4th. Resolved : That the Mississippi River Commission are entitled to the full confidence and cordial thanks of the entire Mississippi valley for the intelligent and satisfactory way in which they have met and solved the many difficult problems presented for their consideration.

5th. Resolved : That it is the sense of this meeting that the Interstate Mississippi River Improvement and Levee Association has been of great service in guarding and promoting the important interest committed in part to their care. They should not only receive the countenance of the various levee organizations of the Mississippi valley, but the support of all public spirited citizens. The association should be sustained and continued, and to that end its president, the Hon. Charles Scott, is requested to call once every year, or oftener if he deems it necessary, at some convenient time and place, joint meetings of said association and the presidents and chief engineers of the levee boards in all the riparian States.

6th. Resolved : Our thanks are heartily tendered Captain Patrick Henry, of Henrico, Ark., for his intelligent and valuable work at Washington and he is urged to accept the re-appointment tendered him at this meeting through Mr. Charles Scott, as the special representative of our Association and continue his important work.

Resolved : That copies of these resolutions be sent the senators and members of the House of Representatives of the various States of the Mississippi Valley and that they be respectfully urged to use all honorable and proper means to secure the passage of an adequate liberal rivers and harbors bill at the approaching session of congress.

The resolutions were adopted without debate, and unanimously.

The Chairman : The report of the Appropriations Committee is now in order.

Mr. McClellan :

NEW ORLEANS, LA., November 15th, 1901.

GENTLEMEN :

Your Committee on Appropriations beg leave to report the following as a basis of assessment for the various levee boards throughout the Valley, and that the amount set opposite their names be paid to the Delta Trust and Banking Company, Treasurer, Vicksburg, Miss., not later than February 15th, 1902 :

Reel Foot Levee District, of Tennessee.....	\$100 00
St. Francis Levee District, of Missouri	200 00
Birds Point Levee District	200 00
St. Francis Levee District, of Arkansas	400 00
Cotton Belt Levee District, of Arkansas	210 00
Laconia Levee District, of Arkansas	300 00
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District, of Mississippi..	700 00
Desha County Levee Board, of Arkansas	125 00
Red Fork Levee Board, of Arkansas	100 00
Mississippi Levee District	700 00
Tensas Basin Levee District, of Louisiana	200 00
Fifth Louisiana Levee District, of Louisiana	700 00
Atchafalaya Basin Levee District, of Louisiana	600 00
Pontchartrain Levee District, of Louisiana	450 00
Lafourche Basin Levee District, of Louisiana	500 00
Lake Borgne Basin Levee District, of Louisiana	150 00
Orleans Levee District, of Louisiana	250 00
Buras Levee District, of Louisiana	100 00
Grand Prairie Levee District, of Louisiana	100 00
Red River, Atchafalaya and Bayou Boeuf Levee District, of Louisiana	200 00
Bossier Levee District, of Louisiana	150 00
Caddo Levee District, of Louisiana	150 00
Chicot Levee Board, of Arkansas	100 00
Total	\$6,680 00

Very respectfully,

J. T. McCLELLAN,

Chairman Appropriation Committee.

The report was adopted unanimously.

Mr. McClellan : Mr. Chairman, I offer the following :

RESOLVED : That the Presidents of the different levee organizations, from Cairo to the Gulf, be requested to present the proceedings of this meeting to their several bodies, and urge the taking of such action as will secure the payment of the requisite funds payable by each, to the Delta Trust & Banking Company,

Vicksburg, Miss., Treasurer, at the earliest possible moment, and not later than February 15, 1902. *Adopted.*

The meeting then adjourned, subject to the call of Mr. Charles Scott, President Interstate Mississippi River Improvement and Levee Association.

A TRUE COPY :

THOS. G. SPARKS, Chairman.

JNO. W. BRYANT, Secretary.

